

VZCZCXRO6225
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #0959/01 1250914
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 050914Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4014
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLLECTIVE
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000959

SIPDIS

EEB FOR ANN RYAN
BANGKOK FOR HOWELL HOWARD AND WINSTON BOWMAN
STATE PASS USTR JANE DOHERTY
STATE PASS USTR/OSTA CLAY HAMILTON AND CASEY BEAN
STATE PASS USAID
STATE PASS HHS/NIH
STATE PASS HHS/CDC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)
AMGT, MG, RP
SUBJECT: MGSF01 AMBASSADOR CHAIRS H1N1 EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE

REF: A) MANILA 0913 B) MANILA 0941 C) State 44254

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador convened Embassy Manila's Emergency Action Committee on May 4 to assess the worldwide H1N1 situation, the Philippine government response, and Post's current actions and next steps. The Philippines lifted the ban on U.S. pork imports thanks to a coordinated Mission effort and recent statements by international animal health authorities. Post is coordinating with Philippine Government counterparts to monitor the spread of H1N1 and prepare to deal with any cases that arise. Embassy's Medical Unit and Community Liaison Office will continue to communicate flu prevention information to the Mission community. END SUMMARY.

Emergency Action Committee Meeting

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador convened the Mission Emergency Action Committee on May 4 to review the global and regional state of H1N1, assess Post preparations for any pandemic, and strategize next steps. So far, no suspected or confirmed cases of H1N1 have been documented in the Philippines. Post has ordered additional influenza test kits in case they are needed. Management Section is increasing the frequency of disinfection at Post's high-traffic areas and working with the Medical Unit to position hand sanitizer at key locations around the Embassy. The Community Liaison Office had already scheduled an Emergency Preparedness Fair for May 9 and will now include updated information about flu prevention and what steps to take if a family member does fall ill. Post will not issue a warden message at this time to avoid undue panic, but will update materials on the Embassy website and in the duty officer kit in case questions about H1N1 arise.

No Flu Panic Yet

¶3. Mission staff have not been unduly alarmed by the outbreak, and the Public Affairs Section has not received calls from the local media. American Citizen Services issued its quarterly newsletter last week and included two articles about H1N1 flu with links to information from the Centers of Disease Control. Veterans Affairs has been conducting an educational campaign for flu prevention and has not detected any undue concern among U.S. or Filipino veterans whom it serves.

Pork Ban Dropped

¶4. The Philippine government ended its previous ban on U.S. pork (Ref. B) thanks to a coordinated Mission effort and several recent

public statements by international animal health authorities. The Mission effort to reverse the ban included calls from Mission members to Department of Agriculture interlocutors and culminated with the Ambassador's meeting with Philippine Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap on May 4. After a discussion with the Ambassador, Secretary Yap agreed that properly cooked pork was safe to eat so the Department had no reason to ban U.S. pork and pork products (Ref. C), and the Department of Agriculture reversed its ban later that day.

Health Ministry Coordination

15. USAID will reach out to Philippine Department of Health (DOH) officials regarding potential assistance for information, education and communications activities. Given possible concerns by Philippine authorities about U.S. Military personnel arriving for joint exercises, Embassy will assure DOH that all troops undergo pre-deployment medical screening prior to every deployment. Additionally, all units are accompanied by medical personnel who monitor and treat all deployed troops. If needed, for any type of communicable disease, deployed personnel will be quarantined or transported out of the country via U.S. Military medical assets.

Next Steps

16. Management will continue to send Mission members updates on H1N1 developments. Mission members will meet with Philippine counterparts to assure them that we have plans in place to monitor the health of our employees and visiting U.S. Military forces.

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KENNEY